

# Anniversary of the Founding of Alexandria in 331 BC (Mon, Apr 7th 2025)

Post by "Joshua" of April 3, 2025 at 10:16 PM

Joshua created a new event:



Event

## [Anniversary of the Founding of Alexandria in 331 BC](#)

Following the work of the French Egyptologist Pierre Jouguet on the so-called pseudo-Callisthenes in 1940, April 7th 331 BC is the traditional date for the founding of the ancient city of Alexandria. Here is an account of that founding, from [The Rise and Fall of Alexandria](#) by Justin Pollard and Howard Reid (a book which I have listened to repeatedly, and always with pleasure):

[...]

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#### Quote

According to Plutarch of Chaeronea, it was through Homer that this place came to the attention of perhaps the greatest general in all history, who, over 2,300 years before you, stood on this same shore, his precious copy of Homer locked in a golden casket in his hands. But when he turned from the sea and looked south he saw only a narrow strip of water separating this island from the mainland, and beyond that an empty coast to which only the smallest of villages clung. When you turn, you will no longer find that scene, for in its place has risen the city founded there by that man, that dreamer—the huge, heaving metropolis of Alexandria.

At the time Homer wrote, there had been some sort of Bronze Age trading post here, almost certainly more impressive than the settlement Alexander found; but Homer's words echoed through the centuries to Alexander, and the mention of this place changed his mind about a great project he was planning. Plutarch tells us that he had it in mind to build a great Greek city on this Egyptian coast, one which would receive the ultimate honor of bearing his name. His architects and surveyors had thus been dispatched and had selected a suitable site where work was just about to begin. Then, he had a dream:

. . . as he was sleeping, he saw a remarkable vision. He thought he could see a man with very white hair and of venerable appearance standing beside him and speaking these lines:

*“Then there is an island in the stormy sea,  
In front of Egypt; they call it Pharos.”*

He rose at once and went to Pharos. . . .

Plutarch, Life of Alexander, in Parallel Lives, 26, 3-10

What he found here was a strip of land running east-west, with a large lake to the south and the Mediterranean Sea to the north. Just off that coast stood the island Homer had mentioned—Pharos—and it soon became clear to Alexander, or his architects at least, that by joining this island to the mainland with a causeway, two great harbors would be created, making the safest and largest anchorage on the whole of the north coast of Egypt. Alexander was delighted and “exclaimed that Homer was admirable in other respects and was also an excellent architect, and ordered the plan of the city to be drawn in conformity with the terrain” (Plutarch, Life of Alexander, in Parallel Lives, 26, 3-10).

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